DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, this project has been pending for the last four years and, as you know, this Government came into power only nine months ago. This Government is taking a lot of initiatives and we are delegating more and more powers to the States. We recently discussed this project in the sub-committee. Only the day before yesterday, we discussed it in the Cabinet also. A sub-committee has been constituted. After finalisation of the PPA and resolution of differences between the two Ministries, this will be finalised at the earliest. Sir, this Government is committed to generation, transmission and distribution of power.

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Sir, I want to have a specific clarification. When are they going to start it and how much time will they take?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, after the approval of the Cabinet, we want to commence the project.

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Hon. Chairman, Sir, the Prime Minister has announced that hereafter they will not clear new private projects. So, what is the position about this project? Do you consider it for clearnance? I would also like to ask whether an increase in the efficiency of the power houses could also help or would you like to increase the efficiency by increasing the number of plants.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Enquiry into working of Oil Selection Boards

*182. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICKHAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to make a high level enquiry into the working of Oil Selection Boards (OSBs) functioning for the last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received compalints of corruption against the OSBs; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to enquire into those complaints

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) Complaints have been received against the selections made by some of the Oil Selection Boards including their alleged indulgence in irregularities and malpractices.

(d) Tenure of the Chairman and the Members of such Boards had been terminated by Government owing to their unsatisfactory performance. A Public Interest Litigation has already been filed in the High Court of Delhi. The complaints/ allegations are being looked into by the Court and the matter is subjudice. Operation of the OSBs is presently in abeyance.

Oil and gas reserves in Mahanadi Basin

*186. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleasd to state:

(a) when the last assessment of oil and natural gas reserves in the Mahanadi Basin in Orissa was made;

(b) the details of the findings thereof; and

(c) the reasons why exploration of oil or natural gas has not been started in the river basin.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) During the period 1978-90 Oil

India Limited carried out exploratory activities and drilled a total of 11 exploratory wells, 4 in the Onland and 7 in the Offshore in the Mahanadi basin. In addition, 4 wells were also drilled in North East Coast Offshore area. However, no commercial hydrocarbon discovery was made.

Capacity utilisation of Bongaigaon Refinery

*187. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the present capacity utilisation of Bongaigaon Refinery;

(b) whether shortage of crude oil supply is the major reason for under utilisation;

(c) whether the shortage is likely to be more acute with commissioning of Numaligarh Refinery; and

(d) if so, the steps contemplated by Government to ensure full capacity utilisation of Bongaigaon Refinery and petrochemicals now and after commissioning of Numaligarh Refinery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The capacity utilisation of Bongaigaon Refinery is likely to be about 67% during 1996-97.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) OIL and ONGC are planning to step up production of crude oil in North East, further to augment availability of crude oil for Barauni Refinery, a new crude-oil pipeline project between Haldia and Barauni is being implemented. This will facilitate higher crude availability for the refineries in Assam.

Compensating the Cooperative Institution for loan waiver scheme

*188. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether several cooperative institutions are facing financial crunch due to loan waiver schemes of the previous Government; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to fully compensate the cooperative institutions for the amount they had to pay for the waiver of loans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PALNNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI YOGINDER KUMAR ALAGH): (a) According to various studies, the problems of cooperative credit institutions basically relate to imbalances, inadequate business, high transaction cost, low margin, low recovery, mounting overdues, lack of professionalism and lack of democratic management. The Loan Waiver Scheme also dampened the recovery climate. But, the implementation of Agriculture and Rural Debt Relief Scheme helped the cooperative institutions to realise irrecoverable dues.

(b) Full and final settlement of the claims of the Cooperative Banks under Agriculture and Rural Debt Relief 1990 Scheme have been made. The Cooperative Banks received an amount of Rs. 3961 crore under ARDR Scheme-1990. Six SCBs and seven SLDBs spanning twelve States certified that there was no element of penal interest in the claims lodged by them and accordingly full amount of eligible claims was reimbursed, In States where penal interest was reported to have been included in the claims lodged, standard deduction of five percent was effected which aggregated to Rs. 169 crore.

Besides, a number of steps have been taken to improve the commerical viability